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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Letter dated 16 November 1992 from the Representative of Cuba to the First Committee addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee

According to the decision taken by the Committee at its organizational meeting on the consideration of agenda item 105 please find attached the views and opinions of the Cuban delegation on the proposals submitted by the Secretariat on Programmes 1, 2 and 7 of Major Programme 1.

As you will note, on a number of proposals of the Secretariat our delegation is not in agreement. Consequently we would appreciate it if you could report accordingly to the Fifth Committee - or even the First Committee - if your decision is that an agreement should be reached.

I would be grateful if this document could be circulated as a document of the First Committee.

(Signed) Humberto RIVERO
Representative
First Committee

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ANNEX

[Original: Spanish]

OPINIONS OF THE DELEGATION OF CUBA TO THE FIRST COMMITTEE REGARDING THE REVISION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN

Programme 1

1. The Cuban delegation's principal difficulty with the Secretariat's proposed revisions to programme 1 (A/47/6 (Prog.1)) of the medium-term plan involves the arbitrary inclusion of the term "preventive diplomacy" in the title of the programme itself, in the structure and priorities of the subprogrammes, in the title of subprogramme 1 and in the paragraphs describing subprogramme 1.

2. It should be noted that in subprogramme 1, by inserting a sentence, an attempt is made in paragraph 1.10 to use the document "An Agenda for Peace" as the legislative basis for the inclusion of the aforementioned concept. The document "An Agenda for Peace" is no more than a proposal by the Secretary-General. Its contents, including the concept of "preventive diplomacy", have no legal value and consequently cannot be used as a legislative basis until such time as they are adopted by the General Assembly or another appropriate body.

3. The new paragraph proposed as a replacement for paragraph 1.19 of subprogramme 3 contains some questionable elements. None of the references to "threats to peace", "conflict" or "disputes" specifies that these phenomena are international in nature. The implication is that internal conflicts or disputes, which, as such, fall within the sole jurisdiction of the States, could also be subject to United Nations research and information gathering mechanisms. Paragraph 1.21, subparagraph (b), of the same subprogramme, which lists the functions of the research and information gathering mechanisms of the Secretariat's new Department of Political Affairs, implies the same by referring only to "developments related to peace and security" without describing them as international.

Programme 2

1. The main problem with the revisions to this programme is their focus, which is currently to strengthen the role of the Security Council by changing the name of the overall programme. At the same time, the title would not be in keeping with the contents of the single subprogramme that would be left in the programme if the proposal in the document to delete subprogramme 2 is approved. At least for programme-related purposes, this would make the items on peace and security considered in the First Committee and other bodies subordinate in nature to the Security Council, since they would be lumped together under the programme's new title, Security Council affairs, an association that we do not consider appropriate.

2. There is no need to comment on the reference in the text to "preventive diplomacy" since it is merely a reference to the title of programme 1, which we have already discussed.

Programme 7

1. As stated in paragraph 7.1 of the Section "General orientation", the legislative authority of the programme on disarmament stems not only from Article 1 of the United Nations Charter but also from the Final Document a/ of the Tenth Special Session, the first special session devoted to disarmament.

2. The Final Document states in paragraph 123 that "In order to enable the United Nations to fulfil its role in the field of disarmament and to carry out the additional tasks assigned to it by this special session, the United Nations Centre for Disarmament should be adequately strengthened."

3. As a consequence of that decision by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General raised the status and changed the character of the Centre, creating the Department for Disarmament Affairs, headed by an Under-Secretary-General.

4. In the proposals now being put forward by way of document A/47/6 (Prog. 7) it is suggested that the Department for Disarmament Affairs be replaced by the Department of Political Affairs, a change said to be in line with the changes recently made by the Secretary-General.

5. Firstly, the delegation of Cuba wishes to state that it does not agree with the decision to eliminate the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and therefore does not agree with the proposal to change in the Programme the name of the Department responsible for disarmament affairs.

6. The work accomplished by the Department for Disarmament Affairs until recently has no doubt been highly useful, and not only would a transfer of the content of that work to the Department of Political Affairs be contrary to the mandate given by the General Assembly in the First Special Session, but in addition, under cover of allegedly better integration and coordination, such a step would from a practical point of view reduce the importance and ranking of that work.

7. Secondly, it is proposed by the Secretariat that a new paragraph 7.9 be added to the Section "General orientation", and that this paragraph should state "... There has also been a significant shift in emphasis of the issues that require urgent action by the international community."

8. The delegation of Cuba is unable to accept that idea in the context of Programme 7 on disarmament, since there is no definition of the United Nations in disarmament affairs which would constitute legislative authority distinct from that conferred by the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, already referred to, which set out the priorities in negotiations in paragraph 45.

9. Thirdly, the idea expressed in clause (b) of the proposed paragraph 7.9, with regard to translating into a practical programme of action the relevant provisions of the Declaration of the Summit Meeting of the Security Council of 31 January 1992, as appropriate, gives rise to serious concerns in the delegation of Cuba, since such a wording could be interpreted as assigning to disarmament activities a particular ranking within the framework of the Security Council's work.

10. The Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and under Article 26, it provides the possibility of referring to the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in article 47.

11. Irrespective of the above, the General Assembly, the first of the principal bodies of the Organization, may under Article 11 consider inter alia the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the members or to the Security Council or to both.

12. It is a widely recognized principle that within the sphere of disarmament, if concrete and effective results are to be achieved, all States must contribute to the endeavours being made, just as all States have the right to participate on an equal basis in the multilateral negotiations on disarmament which relate to their own national security.

Notes

a/ Resolution S-10/2.